

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /117 W
----- 074376

R 301625Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7857

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VC

SUBJ: JOSHUA EXPELLED FROM PPP

REF: BRIDGETOWN 1574, 1576 & 1634; A-121

1. ACCORDING TO A REUTER'S REPORT ON SEPT 26, FORMER DEPUTY PREMIER AND FINANCE MINISTER OF ST VINCENT EBENEZER JOSHUA WAS EXPELLED FROM THE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL PARTY (PPP). JOSHUA HAD LED THE PPP EVER SINCE HE FOUNDED IT TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO. HIS WIFE, IVY JOSHUA, WAS EXPELLED AT THE SAME TIME. SHE HAD BEEN A FORMER PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY AND LIKE HER HUSBAND, A MEMBER OF THE NOW DISSOLVED HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

2. ACTING VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PPP AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS OTHNEIL SYLVESTER ANNOUNCED THE EXPULSIONS FOLLOWING A TWO AND HALF HOUR MEETING OF THE PPP GENERAL COUNCIL. HE SAID THE COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO THIS ACTION FOLLOWING INQUIRIES INTO THE CONDUCT OF THE JOSHUAS WHICH LED TO THE TOPPLING OF THE ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT OF PREMIER JAMES F. MITCHELL (SEE REFTELS). SYLVESTER ALSO DISCLOSED THAT JOSHUA'S REFUSAL TO MEET WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE PPP AS WELL AS WITH LEADING PARTY MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS WAS A FACTOR IN THE COUNCIL'S DECISION.

3. JOSHUA, HOWEVER, CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN THAT HE IS STILL
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THE LEADER OF THE PARTY. HE CHARGES THAT THE PPP GENERAL COUNCIL

MEETING WAS "ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL." ACCORDING TO JOSHUA, THE PROPER PROCEDURE FOR REMOVING THE PARTY LEADER WOULD BE TO HOLD A REFERENDUM OF ALL DULY ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE REGISTER AS REQUIRED BY THE PPP'S 1969 CONVENTION. THE LEADER OF THE PARTY COULD THEN ONLY BE REMOVED BY A 75 PER CENT VOTE AGAINST HIM.

4. EARLY IN THE WEEK BEFORE THE COUNCIL MEETING, JOSHUA HAD DECLARED THAT HE HAD HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE PPP TO TOPPLE THE ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT OF PREMIER MITCHELL. HOWEVER, SYLVESTER HAS DENIED THAT THE PPP EVER GAVE ITS SUPPORT TO JOSHUA FOR THIS PURPOSE.

5. COMMENT: THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE CURRENT ST VINCENT POLITICAL CRISIS COMES AS NO SURPRISE. JOSHUA HAD PREVIOUSLY THREATENED THREE PPP MINISTERS (SYLVESTER, DENNIE, AND CUFFY) WITH EXPULSION BECAUSE OF THEIR CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH PREMIER MITCHELL. APPARENTLY, SYLVESTER HAS TAKEN OVER THE REINS OF POWER IN THE PPP AND HAS MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POSITION BY THROWING JOSHUA OUT OF THE PARTY BEFORE THE LATTER COULD MOVE AGAINST HIM AND THE OTHER PPP MINISTERS WHO REFUSED TO FOLLOW JOSHUA OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT. REPORTEDLY JOSHUA PLANS TO CALL A MEETING OF THE PPP EARLY IN OCTOBER "TO DETERMINE THE POSITION OF SYLVESTER AND OTHER PERSONS TALKING OF THROWING OUT THE LEADER." REPORTS AS TO THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT JOSHUA COMMANDS AMONG THE PARTY-FAITHFUL VARY WIDELY. NEVERTHELESS, WHETHER OR NOT HE IS SUCCESSFUL IN REGAINING CONTROL OF THE PPP, HE AND HIS WIFE ARE EXPECTED TO WIN REELECTION TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.
SIMMS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRIDGE01704
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740276-0144
From: BRIDGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974094/aaaaacsa.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BRIDGETOWN 1574, 1576 & 1634; A-121
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JOSHUA EXPELLED FROM PPP
TAGS: PINT, VC, PPP, (EBENEZER, JOSHUA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005